

-27-65
W.P.O.S.T.

Three Reasons for His Decision

LBJ's Low-Key U.N. Speech Avoided Dramatic Proposals

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AUSTIN, Tex., June 26

President Johnson was interrupted by 15 bursts of mild applause Friday during his speech before the twentieth anniversary session of the United Nations in San Francisco.

It was not the kind of applause that warms the heart of a political leader. Yet the President could hardly have been surprised. He deliberately chose to make his speech in low key and to avoid any dramatic new proposals.

There were three reasons for his decision.

First, he decided that an anniversary convocation was not the place for surprising new policy declarations. The General Assembly was not in session to debate or to

News Analysis

deliberate but to celebrate an anniversary. It will meet in the fall in New York to make decisions about the future.

Undecided on Proposals

Second, the Administration had been unable to agree on some new proposals under consideration. The President had not had time to prepare the groundwork for acceptance of a plan that Washington has in mind to resolve the deadlock over U.N. finances that paralyzed last year's General Assembly.

Third, the President wanted to use the occasion to emphasize again the refusal of the Communists to negotiate on Viet-Nam and this country's willingness to do so under almost any formula anyone might devise.

Mr. Johnson and his advisers are convinced that world opinion is supporting the United States proposal for "unconditional discussions" and is increasingly critical of the Communist refusal to move toward the conference table.

The Administration has been heartened in the last few days by world reaction to British Prime Minister Wilson's proposal that he and a group of Commonwealth leaders visit the capitals concerned with the Viet-Nam war to try to find a peace formula.

Neutrals Critical of Reds

According to reports reaching the White House, opinion in Ondia and other neutral countries and in Western Europe has been highly critical of the cold rebuff the Communist na-

tions have given to the Wilson plan.

Mr. Johnson invited the U.N. to use its influence to start peace talks. He reminded the convocation that "the processes of peaceful settlement are blocked by willful aggressors, contemptuous of the opinion and the will of mankind."

There were picket outside the San Francisco Opera House demanding that the United States lay the Viet-Nam issue before the U.N. But the United States has argued that the world body is too frail an institution to assume such a heavy responsibility now.

The President asked the U.N.'s help; he did not try to involve it directly and completely in the conflict.

It may be that the delegates were disappointed in the speech simply because they had been led to believe that major proposals would be made. High Administration officials, not excepting the President, were responsible for some of the rumors. At one point Mr. Johnson apparently believed that he might make some dramatic move.

Delinquency Issue Raised

There was one issue on which he was about ready to speak. It involved a compromise in the battle over the failure of Russia and other members to pay U.N. peacekeeping assessments.

The U.N. charter says that members falling two years behind in payments "shall have no vote" in the Assembly. For a year, the Assembly had been paralyzed because of the deadlock over this issue.

Only 10 days ago the President told a news conference that "we don't want to see the U.N. wrecked on account



Associated Press

San Francisco police stop pickets moving into the courtyard of the Mark Hopkins Hotel. They had marched from the Opera House to Nob Hill Friday in the belief that President Johnson would confer with

United Nations Secretary General U Thant in the hotel. The President and U Thant held their conference in the Opera House after Mr. Johnson addressed the U.N.'s 20th anniversary observance.

of a dollar . . . We think it would be tragic if because of a relatively minor amount of money compared to the total budgets of the various nations, the U.N. should become less effective because of that."

A compromise proposal, whereby members would make "voluntary" contributions to overcome the U.N. deficit, has been favorably considered. But the President's sensitive antennae told him that Congress, which must pay the bills, might balk. And he did not have time to conduct the necessary bargaining with congressional leaders before his speech.

Mr. Johnson is therefore talking now of a major address to the General Assembly in the fall, when he will have had time to prepare the groundwork at home and when the Assembly is in a position to debate and to act on his proposals.

[Western diplomatic sources at the U.N. convocation in San Francisco were reported today to be saying that the United States soon would make a "substantial" voluntary financial contribution. The Associated Press said the contribution would go to the new U.N. solvency fund and would not be con-

ditioned to a like Soviet contribution.]

There was one section of the President's speech that appeared, from the applause, to make a major impression. It was the call for "all lands—including this land—(to) face forthrightly the multiplying problems of our multiplying populations."